THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Government of Tamil Nadu have initiated actions for prevention of such incidents in the future. A psychiatrist has been posted to Erwadi Primary Health Centre with adequate supply of psychiatric medicines and Health Inspector has been instructed to visit places where mentally ill are detained- Government of Tamil Nadu have decided to shut down all unlicenced premises. Heads of Department of Psychiatry of all Government Medical Colleges have been appointed as Inspecting Officers for inspection of Psychiatric Hospital/Nursing Homes. Steps have been taken to send the patients who have shown substantial improvement to their families and other patients to Mental Health Institutions run by the Government. A Monitoring Committee is being set up in each district under the Chairmanship of the District Collector, to monitor all such institutions ensure that the guidelines to be formulated by the State Mental Health Authority are adhered to and a Psychiatrist will be posted to all the District Headquarter Hospitals for better mental health care. All District Collectors have been directed to make immediate inspection of all shelters for mentally ill and ensure that in future no such shelter is allowed to function without getting a license as per Mental Health Act, 1987.

Cases of child marriage

3675. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of child marriage detected during the last three years all over the country; and

(b) the concrete measures taken by Government to curb this malpractice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) and (b) The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 as amended in 1978, makes punishable marriage of boys below 21 years and of girls below 18 years. According to information furnished by the Ministry of Home Affairs the number of cases registered under this Act during 1998, 1999 and 2000 were 56,44 and 45 respectively. Figures for the years 1999 and 2000 are provisional. Further the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 was amended in 1976 to legally enable a girl to repudiate a child marriage whether the marriage has been consummated or not. Other measures to curb this malpractice include creation of social awareness against child marriages and implementations of schemes to raise the status of the girl child and women.